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C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002274

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/06/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: ABBAS DELAYS ISSUANCE OF REFERENDUM DECREE

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary. Following June 6 consultations between President Abbas (Abu Mazen) and the PLO Executive Committee (PLO-EC) in Ramallah, spokesmen for the president announced that he intends to delay for several days issuing a decree on holding a national referendum. The delay reportedly stems from regional Arab pressure to allow for additional time to reach consensus with Hamas on the prisoners' initiative. The PLO-EC supported Abu Mazen's decision and entrusted him with determining the legal and technical aspects of the referendum. PLO-EC contacts expressed little confidence that Hamas and Abu Mazen will bridge their differences in the coming days. End summary.

Abu Mazen Delays Presidential
Decree for Several Days

12. (C) After a June 6 meeting with members of the PLO-EC, Abu Mazen decided to delay issuing a decree to hold a national referendum for several days. PLO-EC member Yasser Abed Rabbo told the press that the extension is intended to give Hamas more time to re-consider its position and that Abu Mazen will use the time to prepare the legal and technical framework for holding a referendum. (Note: PLC member Salam Fayyad, who attended the June 6 meeting, told the Consul General that Abu Mazen intends to use the time to make arrangements for holding the referendum and not for additional talks with Hamas. Fayyad thought that Abed Rabbo's statements to the press were intended to show that Abu Mazen had not closed the door for Hamas to accept the prisoners' document. End note.)

Abu Mazen Cites Regional
Arab Pressure for Delay

13. (C) Abu Mazen adviser Ahmad 'Abd al-Rahman told ConGen POL FSN Specialist that Abu Mazen informed the PLO-EC in a meeting June 6 that several Arab regional leaders had pressed him to allow for more time for discussions with Hamas. Abu Mazen, he said, told the PLO-EC that he does not intend to negotiate with Hamas, but only to give the movement one last chance to re-consider its position. 'Abd al-Rahman expressed pessimism that an agreement can be reached with Hamas.

Hamas Unlikely to Bend

14. (C) PLO-EC member and FIDA secretary general Saleh Ra'fat told ConGen POL FSN that he doubts Hamas will compromise its position on recognition of Israel and that the coming days will pass without an agreement. Such an outcome

will also put Hamas in a difficult position because it will face a referendum, he commented. PLO-EC member Emile Jarjou'i told ConGen Poloff that while the PLO-EC accepts the principle of holding a referendum, it would leave the timing to Abu Mazen.

WALLES